CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies News

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From the Dean's Desk
A Vote of Thanks

The academic year 1987-88 has drawn to a close. It was a spectacular year both administratively and academically. After nine months of turmoil, the renovations to the Graduate Studies Administration Building are essentially complete and it is tribute to the good humour and tolerance of students, staff and faculty that we have survived the process without major calamities. I would like to extend a personal vote of thanks to the university community for their understanding and support during this difficult period. We will spend the next twelve months refining and improving the academic and administrative services to students, professors and programs for which these changes were made. We have also witnessed the systematic coordination of major international graduate initiatives under the auspices of the Concordia Council for International Cooperation. We can be proud of these achievements.

I would like to thank all Graduate Program Directors for their dedication and efficient and imaginative direction of our programs. This year the number of difficult cases that had to be mediated personally by the Dean was significantly smaller than a year ago and we hope to reduce that number still further in the coming year. It is my belief that the effective direction of graduate programs depends strongly on the degree of trust in the people involved in the process and on the continuous flow of information between programs and administrators. The first regular meeting of the newly created **Assembly of Graduate Program Directors** in April was a good beginning of the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and points of view that is a necessary component of this process.

It may be of general interest to note that as of this year, the Division of Graduate Studies has developed a significantly extended system of standing committees that will increase direct faculty participation in the management, organization and administration of our graduate programs. At present we have a Steering Committee (new), a Rules and Regulations Committee (new), an Awards Committee, an Appraisals Committee, an Academic Standards Committee (new), and a Calendar Committee (new). All but one of the new committees have begun their work and the results of their deliberations will be presented to the Board of Graduate Studies in the new academic year.

Many of you will have noticed the new format of the Doctoral Thesis Defence Announcements. We have received favourable comments on this initiative since this format reflects our respect for the public thesis examination process. In 1987-88, the number of successful doctoral candidates rose dramatically and I would like to congratulate all our new Ph.D.'s on their achievements. One of the pleasant duties and prerogatives of a Dean of Graduate Studies is the chairing of doctoral thesis examinations, and this year I made an effort to

chair personally as many of these defences as possible. I can report that I have noticed a steady improvement in the quality of our graduates, and in 1988-89 we will systematize further our support of the efforts of thesis supervisors and examination committees to guide our graduate students towards academic excellence.

M. E. Szabo

Art Education Diploma

Art Education provides visual literacy and a link with past cultures to give children and adolescents a way to communicate through image-making.

"We live in a visual world, and being able to read and make visual images is basic to any education process," says Leah Sherman, director of Concordia's Art Education Diploma program. "The arts are the expression of a culture...when you make something, it is unique and an extension of yourself. In the making you have affirmed yourself and made your mark."

Teaching this basic point to children is only one of the things the diploma program prepares its graduates to do. They also learn how to prepare curricula in studio art and art history, how to understand and modify behaviour problems in children and how to teach children with physical disabilities. These diploma students learn to develop and implement educational techniques that are directed to problems in reading, mathematics, spelling, writing, and language.

Four of the interns in the Diploma in Art Education, clockwise: Marie-Claude Vezeau, Vicki Wheeler, Pam Devenyi, Lisa Solmaso.

Other Quebec universities squeeze art training and pedagogy into a three-year undergraduate program, said Sherman, "whereas we require an undergraduate degree as well as the diploma, which adds an extra year. The more focused study required by the diploma is the reason that Concordia's students are so well prepared. Certification is given by the Ministry of Education, which has approved our program, and it authorizes them to teach," she added. "The program qualifies them for this authorization."

"We look for commitment to teaching as a profession," said Sherman, "particularly if applicants come (with a degree) from outside the university."

Applicants to the program must have good academic standing, have academic letters of reference from professors and must write a letter of intent. Students complete two internships, which are integral elements of the program. In the first internship students work two days a week for 10 weeks in an elementary school, during the second they teach five days a week in a high school for six weeks. A faculty member supervises five or six students who take over the art program in the elementary schools; in high schools the graduate students teach their own classes under the supervision of a teacher from the school in which they are doing the internship.

"Our interns are welcomed into schools based on the past performance of students," said Sherman, "their reputation is very good. For the Arts Department this is an important part of the program, it is our link with the community. No other university does that with the backup of a faculty member." The community link is essential

Student from Francesca Cabrini Elementary School, M.C.S.C.

to the diploma program and it constitutes the heart of Art Educations's commitment to this form of education.

Internship supervisor, Andrea Fairchild, said students plan their own lessons and work with students in basic drawing, painting, clay, collage, and three-dimensional construction of "found" art, which recycles everyday objects. "An important aspect of internship is to teach children how to talk about their own art and as well as about other works of art – not just scribbling and painting," said Fairchild. "The children learn verbal and critical skills, they make judgments and learn values."

Graduate students learn a wide variety of skills so they can teach not only art but other things as well. A unique aspect of the program is that students may also continue their own studio work so they can relate it to their teaching experience. The bond between practice and

teaching is maintained through this ability to continue working in the arts themselves. This exciting and innovative program is well grounded in both the schools and the studio.

For anyone interested in the Diploma in Art Education, please write L. Sherman, Graduate Program Director, Diploma in Art Education, VA 207, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8, or phone (514) 848-4646.

Diploma in Advanced Music Performance

Concordia's Diploma in Advanced Music Performance has caused quite a stir in the international music community. Since the program began accepting students in 1980 it has become one of the most sought-after programs of study for serious performing musicians from around the world.

The concentration on performance and personalized instruction in Concordia's 30-credit program has drawn such a high calibre of students that it has gained a worldwide reputation. Candidates include respected professionals, many already possessing a master's, and in a few cases, a doctorate in music. Clearly, these candidates are convinced that Concordia's diploma program offers something above and beyond the guidance and instruction they have received elsewhere – at any academic, professional or private instruction level.

The program's concentration on performance "studies" with an emphasis on the special needs and interests of each student, distinguishes it from both the European academies (conservatories) and North American music schools. Supported by electives that range over the entire "field" of performance, all instruction involves performing or is performance-related. The result is a structure with objectives and level of excellence in musical performance that is unique.

Throughout, every effort is made to prepare students for the practical realities of a life in music: techniques of practice; rehearsal, recital and audition preparation; coping with performance anxiety, and the prevention and care of injury – all of which are integrated with the broader cultural, aesthetic and perceptual dimensions that make for intelligent and meaningful music-making.

Music performance education in North America generally offers more options than that of Europe. However, the criteria – from the neighborhood piano teacher to famous schools like Julliard – are much less consistent. For example, many university music programs put certain perceived academic and musical standards above the real developmental needs of their students – a practice that often leaves even the most gifted students with serious deficiencies.

"When you enter a prestigious music school in the United States you are expected to leave your playing problems behind you. The teacher is there to give you 'finishing school' advice – often perfunctory, and self-evident – such as 'play faster and slower there.' When students meet in the classroom, it is usually to compete rather than learn from each other. There is very little consideration of the real developmental problems that plague many budding performers," explains Anna Szpilberg, assistant to Program Director, Philip Cohen.

Diploma Program Director, Advanced Music Performance, Phil Cohen

"One consequence of this attitude," according to Szpilberg, "is that many students waste a lot of time going from teacher to teacher – often in the mistaken belief that associating with someone with a big reputation will promote their careers, if not their playing abilities."

Cohen, who designed Concordia's diploma program, has drawn on the best aspects of the European and North American traditions, but with a distinctive emphasis that reflects the Music Department's position in a Faculty of Fine Arts. The result in a program that provides the serious music student with a quality of music education equal to anything currently available.

The program concentrates on what each student needs to develop as an artist, using seminars, workshops, tutorials, consultations, and private instruction to improve all aspects of performance. This means the program is multi-dimensional, designed to meet the needs as well as the goals of each student.

Cohen's weekly seminars investigate the different kinds of problems each student experiences in interpretive, physical, stylistic and repertoire aspects of music. The teacher initiates discussion of what students do as they perform, pointing out individual difficulties and suggesting improvements that can help not only one student's performance, but also the total performance of the group. Cohen also contributes significantly to musicians with physical disabilities or injuries and with perceptual handicaps and helps these musicians renew their skills.

"I've never witnessed anything like it," said Szpilberg. "I have been in other schools – at

McGill, Indiana University, and before that in Poland... none of those places are teaching students how to practice and rehearse, how to prepare for competitions and to acquire a repertoire for a life in music. Cohen's unique approach to music instruction and his exceptional musical and personal qualities are what attracts most students to the program," said Szpilberg.

At present, the program can accommodate candidates specializing in piano, organ, harpsichord, clarinet, voice and flute. Instruction on other instruments is available under special conditions. In addition to Cohen, who works mostly with pianists, the full-time teaching staff include some of Canada's foremost performing musicians. These include organist and Order of Canada recipient, Bernard Lagacé, clarinetist Sherman Friedland, flutist Liselyn Adams and soprano Shari Saunders.

Cohen is a graduate of L'Ecole Alfred Cortot and the Conservatoire de Musique du Québec (Montréal), where he studied with the noted French pianist and pedagogue, Yvonne Hubert. Hubert, who has taught some of Canada's most celebrated pianists, was herself a student of Alfred Cortot, generally considered to be one of the greatest pianists of the twentieth century. Cohen began his teaching career as assistant to Hubert at the Conservatoire and subsequently at McGill, before establishing and heading the undergraduate music program at Sir George Williams. After Sir George Williams merged with Loyola to form Concordia in 1975, he continued on until 1977 as Head of Music and Assistant Director of Performing Arts.

Cohen also regularly conducts master classes, seminars, workshops and study groups in Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, and New York and occasionally in Europe. His students include many acclaimed performing artists, artists in residence and prize winners in national and international competitions. Despite the success of the program, Cohen is very modest about the role he has played in creating what has become one of the world's most unique programs of music study.

Mostly, he's excited about the calibre of students the program is attracting not only from Europe but from as far away as France, Poland, China and Japan. He is very pleased as well with the recent exchange agreements between Concordia and the ministries of culture and education in Poland.

His contribution was to initiate the talks that led to the agreement, for which he was honoured with a personal invitation from the Vice-Premier to visit Poland. "Now that the agreement has been signed, we will have access to a large number of exceptionally well qualified students," says Cohen.

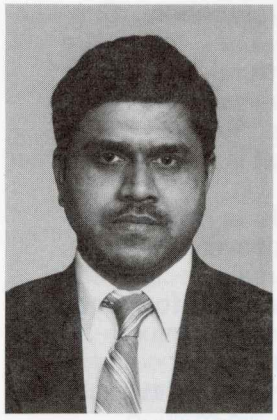
But he advises candidates applying to the program to be prepared for new artistic and personal challenges, beyond the acquisition of technique and academic credentials. "All things considered," he says, "I would choose a student who is challenged and prepared to work over one who can raise the roof technically but has little else to contribute."

For further details about the program, call (514) 848-4706, or write Philip Cohen, Program Director for the Diploma in Advanced Music Performance-Concordia University 7141 Sherbrooke St. W., L-RF-305, Montreal, Quebec H4B 1R6.

Profile: A.S. Narasimha Murthy

Dr. A.S. Narasimha Murthy is a recent graduate from the Department of Civil Engineering, with a Ph.D. in Transportation Engineering – the first doctorate to be awarded in this area of specialization by the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. He received his M.Eng. in Transportation in Spring 1983 from Concordia and entered the Ph.D program. He also holds B.Sc. and M.Eng. (Hydraulics) degrees from India.

His thesis entitled, "Comprehensive Study of Provincial Commodity Transportation" deals with the development of distribution and modal split models for commodity flows across the Province of Alberta. This study is expected to aid transportation planners to understand the movement of commodities and improve the efficiency of the existing transportation network.



Profile: Dr. A.S. Narasimha Murthy

Currently he is working in the Department of Civil Engineering as a post-doctoral Fellow and his area of research is Hazardous Materials Transportation. His other areas of research include Commodity Transportation, Energy Conservation, Computer Applications in Civil Engineering and Engineering Education.

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